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Old James, the Irish Pedlar.

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OLD JAMES ON HIS TRAVELS.

OLD JAMES,

THE IRISH PEDLAR.

WRITTEN FOR THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,

BY

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OF CORK, IRELAND.



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O L D J A M E S.

THE school-hours had passed, and the scholars were found,
All seated in ranks, on the sunny play-ground ;
For the teacher had promised, if all behaved well,
That evening a tale about Ireland to tell.
See ! now she is coming her word to fulfil,—
The wildest among them is silent and still ;
The rude and the gentle, the forward and shy,
All anxious to catch the first glance of her eye ;
As smiling she takes in the circle her place,
And turns to the group her benevolent face.

I'm going to tell you (the lady began)
A story, dear children, about a great man.
You have heard about many called great upon earth,
Sometimes from their riches, sometimes from their birth;
Sometimes from the mighty exploits they have done,
The battles they've fought, or the kingdoms they've won;
Sometimes from their learning, their titles, or power;
Sometimes from their beauty,—that perishing flower;
But though in a great many lands I have been,
And many great people, like these, I have seen,—
The prize for true greatness I freely award,
To OLD JAMES,—who was “great in the sight of the Lord.”*

And, who was Old James? You of course will inquire,—
Now to answer that question is just my desire:
For he was a man 'twas a blessing to know,
As many a labour of kindness would show.
Old James was an Irishman born and bred,
And like thousands beside him in Ireland, he led

* Luke i. 15.

A wandering life,—and year after year,
He travelled the land from Coleraine to Cape Clear;
Yet 'twas not to beg,—for Old James had enough,
As he said, of this world and its “perishing stuff :”
So he sought not for raiment, or shelter, or food,
But he, like his Lord, “went about doing good.”*

THEY called him a pedlar,—but truth, if 'twas told,
Would say that he gave away more than he sold.
Wherever he wandered, he carried a pack,
Or rather a stout leather box, at his back.
And what was it filled with? Guess, children, I pray :
With ribbons, and laces, and jewels, you say.—
No, no, you are wrong.—Says another, “Gold rings,
Gold chains, and gold watches, and twenty fine things.”
No, no.—“Well, fine gowns, caps and shawls,” cries another;
“There’s a pedlar that comes every year to my mother,—
And she buys a new gown, and a shawl from him then,
That serves her for Sundays till he comes again.”

* Acts x. 38.

"*I* know it! *I* know!"—cries a fourth little lad,
"Twas gingerbread-nuts, figs and raisins he had;
Bull's eyes and red comfits, and sugar-sticks too,
Just such as we got, ma'am, last Christmas, from you."

"I'm sure," cries a fifth, "he had scissors and knives,
Tapes, bodkins and pocket-books, fit for good wives:
And buttons and needles, and thimbles and thread,
For tailors and work-women, earning their bread."

"*I* think," says great Tom,—looking wondrously wise,
(And so he should be, if we judge from his size,
But many a lesser and younger knows more,)

"*I* think it was toys in his box that he bore;
Girls value such things, and some boys perhaps may,
But, indeed, I myself never cared much for play."

Well, Tom, 'tis a marvellous pity that we
Can't get others to see us, as we ourselves see.

You're *all* wrong,—he might have knives, scissors and toys,
And gingerbread-cakes, for good girls and boys;
But he carried a treasure through country and town
Worth more than the jewels of England's bright crown.

Ay,—gather the crowns of the earth all together,
They have not against it the weight of a feather :
'Twould be cheap if exchanged for the mines of Peru,—
You have it ! you have it ! my dear little Sue ;
I hear you myself,—but pray try to speak out,—
“ I think, ma'am 'twas Bibles he carried about.”

Yes, 'Twas Bibles he carried—God's MESSAGE OF LOVE,
To rebels and sinners sent down from above :
To tell them he would not that any should die,
But, turning from sin, to the Saviour should' fly.
Alas ! that so many make light of his word,
Despising the blood of their crucified Lord ;
Resisting his Spirit, refusing his grace,
Defying the Maker of all to his face ;
Preferring the things that dishonour his name,
And bring on themselves disappointment and shame.
And what will they do in the end ?—When the sound
Of the trumpet shall summon their dust from the ground,

And their guilty unsanctified souls then shall meet
The Saviour,—but not on his bright mercy-seat!
'Tis the day of his wrath!—And where shall they fly?—
Can mountains and rocks hide their sins from his eye?—
Ah! no;—He's no longer the Lamb that was slain,*
But Judah's dread Lion,—all hope is now vain.

Dear children! while yet in the season of youth,
Remember your Maker, rejoice in his Truth.
Think much upon that which King Solomon said,
The pathways of wisdom † are pleasant to tread.
In them you'll be safe from the wrath that's to come,
And happy in thinking of heaven, your home;
And useful while walking like Jesus, your Lord,
And holy while taught by his Spirit and word.
Now! now! do believe on the Saviour, and then
You'll find his sweet promises yea and amen.‡

* Rev. v. 5, 6.

† Prov. iii. 17.

‡ 1 Cor. i. 20.

Now! now! not to-morrow,*—I mean not to say
You'll not find him to-morrow,—but seek him to-day.
For why in a world like this should you choose
One hour of such solid enjoyment to lose?
To him be the praise that there are not a few
Who have this enjoyment!—Dear children, will you?

Now if to Old James and his pack we return,
What he thought of the Bible perhaps we may learn.
There are many that sell it, and purchase it too,
Yet never inquire what it tells them to do;
And some who adorn the outside with pains,
Know nothing about what the inside contains.
Some like a gilt Bible to lay on their shelves,
Who never remember it speaks to themselves.
Nay some read it constantly, day after day,
Can repeat to you chapter on chapter, and say
Where such a book, chapter, or verse can be found,
Yet the gospel to them is no more than a sound;—

* Psalm xciv. 7; 2 Cor. vi. 2.

A musical sound,* that is sweet to the ear,
But to conscience or heart it has never come near.

Wherever James stopped, 'twas his work without fail
To visit the hospital, poor-house, or jail.
If such were not found in the place where he went,
There was surely some school where an hour might be spent.
It often would happen indeed that he'd see
The school was not such as he wished it to be.
'Twould be plain, when the books and the lessons were shown,
That little was taught which was worth being known.
“Well, well,” he would think, “I'll not turn away,
Some word for my Lord I'll be able to say.
The darker they are, the more need that I should
Say something, as he gives me power, for their good :
If no more I can do, these poor children shall know
That there *is* such a book as the Bible. I'll show
They haven't got *that* which God meant for their use.
Who knows what a blessing his word may produce?

* Ezek. xxxiii. 32.



“ When James brought it forth, the stiff schoolmaster said—” p. 15.

'Twas seldom, if ever, Old James gave offence,
He spoke with such kindness as well as good sense;
For he knew that whatever our passions may say,
To scold men for error is not the right way.
We cling but the closer to errors we love,
When others with railing and harshness reprove.—
There's many a tale, did the time but allow,
I could tell of Old James;—for instance, as, how,
At a school where the Bible had never been read,
When James brought it forth, the stiff school-master said,
That to read that book there was opposed to their rule,
He never allowed it at all in his school.
“Dear me! sir,” said James. “Well, I'm sorry for that,
For I think it's the book of all books, sir, for *Pat*;—
(He meant for the Irish.) Why, sir, I was down,
Last week, in the County Tyrone, at Cookstown:
And I went to a school there,—a school, sir, like yours,—
(The master's a cousin of Andy McClure's;)
Well, it happened I went on their great public day,
When the gentry all round came their visits to pay,

To see what the boys, through the past year, had done,
And who would get prizes and who would get none.
There were boys (and two yellow-haired urchins he eyed,
Who with faces all eagerness sat by his side)
Scarce bigger, I'm sure, sir, than these little friends,
And Euclid just hung at their young fingers' ends.
Then, as for arithmetic, that was a joke ;
And 'twas marvellous, too, the good grammar they spoke ;
And they'd read you the map of the world, sir, off-hand,
With twenty things more that I don't understand.
All northern boys, too, sir,—and every one knows
Our southern lads always are smarter than those.
But the thing above all that my fancy most took,
Was the knowledge they had about God's blessed Book ;
There seemed not a truth that its covers contain
But was writ on their memory, in letters as plain
As I read it here.—Not a question you'd try,
But the boy that was asked had a ready reply.
Oh, sir, my old heart felt 'twas doing me good,
To find God's kind message so well understood ;

And I thought, if these boys should grow up to be men,
Yea, live to complete their three-score years and ten,
Of such an unspeakable treasure possessed,
They'll live to be blessings, and die to be blessed.”
The school-master said not a word in reply,
But twirled round his rule, and looked sheepish and shy.
Encouraged by silence, Old James just the while
Laid his hand on his shoulder, and said with a smile,
—“I think, sir, if every young lad in the land
Had this volume of love and of peace in his hand,
He'd have more of that love and that peace in his heart,
And fightings and fears from old Ireland would part.
Oh, sir, can it be that the story of grace,
Proclaiming God's pity to man's guilty race;
Revealing a Saviour almighty to save,
Who himself! his own self! as our sacrifice gave;
Declaring him ready to pardon our sin,
And the Spirit, too, ready to cleanse us within;
Can such things be known, sir, to any young mind,
And not make it tender and loving and kind?”

Now, children, while this conversation went on,
Every boy in the school was as still as a stone ;
Devouring each word as Old James put it forth ,
And wishing their school was like those in the north.
Till the school-master said, " Sir, I'm sorry, indeed,
'Tis not in my power to permit you to read ;
But I'd like to hear more of the schools you have seen,
For I know that you have a great traveller been.
As the nights now are bright, and the weather is fine,
Perhaps you'd walk this way again, sir, at nine.
Our house is the first in the lane that you see,
And my wife will be happy to give you your tea."

'Twas just what James wished ; so he promised to go,
And quitted the school—all the boys bowing low.

Now some may suspect that the school-master meant
To beat, or abuse poor Old James when he went ;
His money to take, or his pack to destroy,
Or burn up his Bible—his treasure—his joy.

Such things have been done,—that is certainly true—
But we'll not condemn *all* for the sins of a few;
Or even of many.—The school-master's mind
Was busy with thoughts of a different kind;
For he longed to hear more of that Bible, whose light
That morning had dawned on his wondering sight.
Yet fearful lest any his wish should remark,
He appointed Old James to come to him at dark.*

The moon was just rising in beauty and pride,
As James took his seat at the master's fireside;
And she was just turning her course to the West,
When he and the school-master thought of their rest.
I can't tell you all, that at that meeting passed,
But this I can tell you,—*it was not the last*.
For day after day James his journey delayed,
And night after night the same visit he paid;
And one and another each evening dropped in,
To hear the glad news of a Saviour from sin.

* John iii. 2.

Untired—untiring, the story he told,
Till the school-master's room was as full as 'twould hold ;
And farther than this,—every Bible he brought,
In a week, by the people was eagerly bought ;
Some English—some Irish—all did not suffice,
So many now sought for the “ pearl of great price ;”
And when in a fortnight he bade them good-bye,
His heart and his pack seemed so light he could fly.

I fear you would think that my story was long
If I told all that passed when the pedlar was gone.
We'll just take a glance at some things that took place,
Then run after James :—so prepare for a race.
There were some in the village—(I can't tell their names)—
Who loved not the Bible as well as Old James ;
Nor as those who with him had oft met to inquire,
The pathway of life, by the school-master's fire.
And when they discovered the Bible had spread,
And both by the master and children was read,—

* Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

(For though he had strictly complied with the rule
Forbidding God's Book to be read in the school,
Yet often, at evening, long after sunset,
A group of the boys in his room would be met,
To read of the things that will make for our peace,
When the cares and the toils of this world shall cease)—
Their anger was great,—and they threatened him sore
If he read it, or let it be read any more.
And they said of Old James, if he ever came back,
They'd seize on and burn every book in his pack.
So the school-master quietly told them he knew
That for each *one* they burned, the Lord would send *two*.
That as for himself, 'twas a thing very light
To be judged of man's judgment,*—*God's word must be right* ;
He felt that to read it must always do good,
And if they forbade it, he'd go where he could.

Not long after this he received, by the post,
A letter from Achill, on Connaught's wild coast :

* 1 Cor. iv. 3.

Old James had made mention of him as a friend,
And one he could safely, he thought, recommend,
To take charge of a school:—so to Achill he went,
Where he teaches the Bible, and so is content.

But many were sad in the village he left,
Which was now of his aid and instructions bereft;
And parents and children were sternly forbidden
To have *such a book*. But great part they had hidden,
Where no one could burn it, or take it away,
Or even discover the place where it lay.
But perhaps you could guess it.—“I think ’twas a chest,”
Cries one.—Says another, “A cupboard is best,
Made fast in the corner by strong iron hooks.”
“But,” says Tom, “what’s to hinder their taking the books?”
Says another, “I think it was under the bed.”
“No,—under the roof-thatch,” exclaims little Ned;
“’Tis there that my grandmother hides the door-key,
When she goes to sell butter to Ballinatray,

And we're at the school."—Says Tom, "I am sure
That under the hay-rick is much more secure ;
Or under the turf-stack."—Says Dick, "In our house
There's a hole in the wall, like the nest of a mouse,
'Tis snug in the corner, close by the fireside,—
I saw father putting his purse there, to hide."
"Ah, no ! Dickey Wheeler, *I* guess it ; *I* guess !
'Twas not in a cupboard, a chest, or a press."
Cries Johnny McNaughten, (a lad very young,
But knowing, and wondrously glib with the tongue,)
"Nor under a roof-thatch, nor hay-rick, nor wall,
But a place that was safer than one of them all.
'Twas where David hid it while tending his sheep,—
'Twas up in their heart,* ma'am, they put it to keep !"
Yes, Johnny ; you're right : it was up in their heart ;
And when it is there, none can bid it depart.
Is it hid within ours ? Can we gratefully say
We meditate on it by night and by day ?

* Psalm cxix. 11.

Ah ! often the Bible to those is most dear,
Who read it in secret, with trembling and fear ;
While those who no caution nor secresy need,
Having no one to make them afraid while they read,
If they do not forget, or despise, or reject,
Yet pay the blest volume mere outward respect.

But while we've been talking, where is our old friend ?
And where are his wanderings likely to end ?
From the banks of the Shannon he skirted the West,
Intending at Achill a season to rest ;
But on his arrival his sorrow was stirred,
And his sympathy quickened by tidings he heard.
So he paused but a night, and next morning was gone,
And at evening had reached to the shores of Lough Conn ;
At the widow O'Reily's he rested the night,
Then off in the morning as soon as 'twas light.
In most of his journeys old James preferred walking,
It gave him such ready occasion for talking

On the subject he loved, with whoever he met—
But all his old ways he seemed now to forget ;
And glad to avoid every needless delay,
He mounted a cart when 'twas going his way ;
Till, finding a coach, he was quickly set down,
At the end of Kildare street, in Dublin's fair town.

Well—leaving his pack in an office behind,
He darts through the city as fleet as the wind.
Gay streets and rich squares I behold him pass through,
Intent on some object that's not within view :
Till he comes to a building all gloomy and grim,
Where the sunshine itself almost seems to look dim.
Now, Old James is a person whom every one knows,
To whom each one kindness and courtesy shows.
The porter has just for an order to wait,—
It comes,—and he instantly opens the gate ;
How warmly he shakes the old man by the hands,
While all are delighted to wait his commands.

And yet his poor heart it is sad, very sad,
As he asks for "O'Reily, the poor Connaught lad ;"—
He follows his guide to the door of the cell,
And no one his sorrowful feelings can tell,—
As he stands for some moments, and hears from within
The wailing lament of this victim of sin.
"Oh, mother ! Where are you ? Where are you ?" he cries.
"Oh ! if you could see your poor Dan, where he lies !
It's you that would grieve, mother darling, to see
The sorrowful end of your trouble with me.
But I know I have broken your heart, mother dear,
Else through fire or water you'd surely be here."

The door is unclosed, and O'Reily is found,
Extended, in hopeless despair, on the ground ;
But hearing their footsteps, he starts to his feet,
Then silent and sullen sinks down on his seat ;
Till casting his eyes to the door, he exclaims,
His hands on his face—"Mr. James ! Mr. James !"

Poor Daniel O'Reily !—Old James knew him long,
A light-hearted lad, full of frolic and song ;
Too careless and wilful to heed as he ought
The lessons of wisdom his friends would have taught.
His mother—"and she was a widow"—(the same
At whose cottage the pedlar had stopped as he came)—
Had found in the Bible her comfort and joy,
And longed till the blessing was shared by her boy.
With grief she remembered his childhood, for then
Her faith she received from the teaching of men ;
And hard had she strove, from his earliest youth,
To teach him what then she believed to be truth :
But now she was taught by another, and knew
No faith but the faith of the Bible is true ;
And she found it was easy enough to sow seeds,
That soon would spring up into poisonous weeds ;
But, oh ! 'twas anxiety, watching and toil,
To clear them away, root and branch, from the soil.

Yet still did she labour, and still did she pray,
Assisted by James, when he travelled her way ;
Though hitherto both had acknowledged with pain,
That all had appeared to be labour in vain.
It was not that Dan cared the worth of a song
Which faith might be right, or which faith might be wrong ;
Nor was it the object pursued by his mother,
To turn him away from one to the other.
“ ’Twill matter but little,” she often would say,
“ What name we may bear at the great judgment day ;
If we are not the Saviour’s disciples in heart,
We’ll be among those he’ll command to depart.
My prayer for you, Dan, both by day and by night,
Is that you may be turned from darkness to light ;
Be washed in the Saviour’s rich fountain of blood,
And led by the Spirit to every thing good :
The Bible itself, Dan, will teach you the rest,
You must try things that differ,* and cleave to the best.

* Phil. i. 10. See marginal reading, compared with 1 Thess. v. 21.



“ Yet still did she labor, and still did she pray.
Assisted by James when he travelled her way.”

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Now sometimes her son would seemed touched as she spoke,
And sometimes he'd turn every word to a joke ;
And when good Old James at the cottage was resting,
His heart would be pained at his lightness and jesting.
'Twas the pride of Dan's spirit that led him to try
To *seem* worse than he *was*, when the pedlar was by ;
And rather than let him perceive he could feel,
He'd let him believe he was hardened like steel :
“ Now do, Mr. James, leave alone a young man,
And let him be merry as long as he can ;—
And, mother, do you put away your *new light*.
Don't you know that the ancient religion is right ?
I can't but remember it, mother, I know,
For often enough you have told me 'twas so ;
And that 'twasn't for people, like me and like you,—
Poor ignorant creatures,—to judge what was true.”

“ Yes, Dan, avourneen,* I confess it this day ;
Forgive your poor mother that led you astray.

* My darling.

I said it, indeed, and my heart it is sore,
To think 'twas the teaching I gave you, asthore.
I might have known, surely, that He that's above,
That's blessing us daily with tokens of love,
Would never have left us a groping for light,
Or trusting to man to be told what was right.
I might have known, surely, the book that he sent
For every man, woman, and child, must be meant:
For it's there that we'll find, if we read as we ought,
The ancient religion, by man never taught.
'Twas given to Adam just after the fall,
Then sure 'tis the oldest religion of all.
Not of virgin, nor angels, nor saints, do we read,
But the Lord of all creatures, the virgin's great Seed.
O, Dan! read the Bible, avourneen, you'll see
'Twill bring you a blessing—the same it brought me."

"O, yes, mother! yes, when I'm weary and old,
And my hand it is weak, and my heart it is cold;

But never till Ireland, my country, is free,
And my mother's a lady, as she ought to be!
And the name of O'Reily is honoured, as when
They reigned over mountain and forest and glen!
While the stranger's now trampling our sod with his feet,
Whose iron hoof-prints at each turning we meet!—
While a tyrant's degrading our emerald soil,
And our children are worn with bondage and toil!—
While they're slaves! abject slaves! in the land that's their
own!

To please the usurper that sits on the throne!—
While the deep bleeding wounds of my country are fresh,
As when first the grim vultures came tearing her flesh,
And while I've a hand in her service to use,
And while I've a life in her service to lose,
It shall never be said that O'Reily stood by,
And gazed on her wrongs with un pitying eye!
No! No! whether living or dying, I'll prove
Still faithful and true to the land of my love!"

Was not that very fine? Dan thought that it was,
But his breath it was spent, and he came to a pause.
Or perhaps he remembered no more of the speech,
His new-found companions were striving to teach.
For this was all talk that O'Reily was learning
From men, who with visions his senses were turning.
What its meaning might be the poor lad never thought;
Or whether it had any meaning or not;
Or whether its meaning were wrong or were right;
But it sounded so fine—it enchanted him quite.

The pedlar said nothing, but stared all the time,
While O'Reily poured forth his oration sublime;
His mother, with wonder nailed down where she sat,
Cried, "Why, Dan, alanna,* who taught you all that?"
Dan looked rather foolish, and said not a word:
So his mother went on,—"'Tis the first time I heard,
As long as I've lived, the O'Reilys were kings,
But time brings to light many wonderful things.

* My child.

Just look at your mother, now, Dan, avourneen,
What a lady she'd make—let alone being queen!"

"Oh, Mrs. O'Reily," the pedlar began,
(For he thought it was wiser to laugh at poor Dan,
Than by reason to show him that sorrow and ruin
Must follow the course that he now was pursuing,)
"Oh, Mrs. O'Reily," he said—"don't you know
The Irish were all kings and queens long ago?
And if we shall live long enough, you and I
May see them again kings and queens, by and by."
—"Well, well," said the widow, "I trust we'll be given,
Afore that time comes, a bright kingdom in heaven."

Alas! poor O'Reily—at present 'twas plain
That reasoning and ridicule both were in vain.
His artful companions had flattered his pride,
And drawn him from duty and reason aside,
Until, at their word, he was ready to stand,
A rebel avowed to the law of the land.

So onward and onward, by vanity led,
Before many months had passed over his head,
In a gay uniform, Dan O'Reily was seen
Engaged in a fight with the troops of the queen.

The skirmish was short, for his friends took to flight,
While Dan, shouting loud for "*Ould Ireland and right!*"
Refusing, when ordered, his weapon to yield,—
Was struck with a musket, and felled on the field.
To a neighbouring guard-house he then was consigned,
Where soon with rough irons his hands were confined;
From thence to the city of Dublin conveyed,
In a cell at Kilmainham the prisoner was laid,
In a week or ten days to be tried for his life.—
How fearful an end of vain-glorious strife!

You guess now the tidings Old James came to know
When he stopped at Achill, as we heard long ago;
And you guess why he went to Lough Conn, on his way,
Some comforting words to the widow to say.



“ The lock grated harshly behind him, and then
The culprit burst out with his wailing again.”

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And you guess why he journeyed to Dublin in haste,
And carefully tried not a moment to waste.
For he thought, "The poor fellow is sorely distressed,
'Tis surely the time for God's word to be blessed."

Now, children,—(of course you remember it well,)
We left him just entering O'Reily's lone cell :
The lock grated harshly behind him, and then
The culprit burst out with his wailing again.
Beside him, in silence, Old James took his seat,
For he saw that his grief was indeed very great :
And his own tender heart found relief from its pain
In the pitying tears that fell from him like rain.

In a few minutes' more, they were able to speak,
And Old James thus proceeded the silence to break :—
" Well, Dan, this *is* bad, but it might have been worse ;
At least, you have time to repent of your course.
You might have been shot to the heart, as you stood
Red-hot in rebellion, and ready for blood.

But now, Dan"—“Ay, *now*, sir, what time may be mine?—
The trial comes on in the morning at nine ;
And then, sir, who knows what the ending will be,
And how little of time may be given to me?”

“The shorter your time, the more need you have, Dan,
To take refuge in Jesus as soon as you can.
The portion of life left to you may be brief,
But how few were the hours of the penitent thief?
Yet they were enough for that heart-spoken word
Addressed to the Saviour, ‘Remember me, Lord.’
And they were enough for the Saviour to say,
‘Thou shalt be in paradise with me to-day.’”—
—“Oh, sir, I’d want time, sure, to make myself fit.”—
—“No, Dan, he’ll do *that*, if you’ll only SUBMIT.
What time had the thief, who came there in sin,
A rebel to Jesus, unholy, unclean?
But his conscience was touched by the scenes of that hour,—
He gave himself up to the Lord, and his power ;

And Christ, by his Spirit, created him new,—
And he's willing to show the same mercy to you."

Dan paused for a minute, then groaned in reply,—
"Oh, sir, with what swiftmess the time's going by.
The day it is hardly begun when 'tis past,
In my happiest time it went never so fast.
I can't think ;—for my mind is swayed upward and down,
Like a ship on the sea, when by tempests 'tis blown.
And what *can* I do, sir?"—"Do just what I say :
Come to Christ *as you are*, not a moment delay.
Suppose now the queen,—(and I'm told she is kind,
And to merciful acts is by nature inclined)—
Suppose she was sitting beside you, like me,
And addressing you thus,—'Now, Daniel, *achree*,
I'm ready your wrongs against me to forgive,
And though you've rebelled, I'll permit you to live,
If you'll only acknowledge how ill you have done,
And submit to the laws of my kingdom and crown?"

Would it take any time for your spirit to burn
With a sense of her love, and to love in return?
And to promise and vow from the depth of your heart,
From loyalty never again to depart?
'Tis true that your wrongs against Heaven have been
Far greater than those you have done to the queen;
For you've been a rebel to God all your days,
And broken his laws in ten millions of ways.
But 'twill take no more time for your heart just to melt
In his love,—not so much!—for no queen ever felt
Such tender compassion for rebels to her,
As our Father in heaven delights to confer!—
But if you had ages of time at command,
All the *fitness* that God will accept at your hand
Is the fitness a beggar must have, to receive
The alms that a prince might be willing to give!
Besides, you *can't* make yourself *fit*, if you *would*;
And more than that, Daniel, you wouldn't, if you *could*.
You want to be saved in another way quite
From what God appoints, though his way must be right.

He beseeches you *now* from rebellion to cease,
And accept of his offered conditions of peace.
'No, no,' you reply, 'I've a way of my own,
In that way I'll be saved, and in that way alone.'
What good can it do you to struggle and fret
Against him,—just like a wild bull in a net?
He's mighty to save, and he's mighty to kill,—
And what can you gain by resisting his will?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. James; I'll be maddened outright;
'Tis that same that haunts me by day and by night.
I know I'm a sinner,—I cannot deny
I was born, sir, in sin,—and in sin I will die.
And what can I say against God in that day
When he'll give every sinner the fruit of his waf?
Oh, yes, sir! I know he is mighty to kill,
I feel that he can, and I fear that he will.
And then, sir, my mother,—I've broken her heart,
And unblessed, unforgiven by her, I'll depart.

They say the true faith will give all that I want,
And I try to find comfort in that, but I can't;—
If I have it one minute, the next 'tis away,
And my heart is just tossed like the waves of the sea.
Sweet Virgin! Blest mother! Oh, grant me relief!
Oh, saints, in your glory! look down on my grief!
Oh, pitying angels! afford me your grace!
And visit my soul in this desolate place!"—

"Ah, Dan!" said the pedlar, all gentle and mild,
"Don't look to the Virgin, but look to her child.
Why, what can she do for your sins to atone,
When Christ is *her* Saviour as much as your own?
Yes! yes!—you may look as you will, but 'tis true,
She needed a Saviour no less, Dan, than you:
Just look at it here in God's own blessed Book,
In verse forty-seventh—first chapter of Luke.
She was blest among women, we all will allow,
But the CROWN must be set on IMMANUEL'S brow;

There's no other 'twill fit, in heaven or on earth,
For what are the saints but poor sinners by birth?
And what are the angels but servants above,
Sent down to our world on errands of love?
And why should we go to the servants for grace,
When the Master himself bids us look on his face?

“But, sir, the good works of the saints, I am told,
Are more precious in heaven than mountains of gold,
And what *they* don't want will be reckoned to those”—

—“Who have not enough of their own, I suppose,”—
Interrupted Old James. “Well, I think if 'twas true
The Bible would say something of it,—don't you?—
But no,—not one word does that volume contain
Of any such method salvation to gain.

It says, ‘There's *none* righteous on earth, *no, not one*’—
‘*Not* a just man on earth that *no* evil has done;’
‘They're all gone like sheep from the shepherd astray,
Each turning himself to his own wicked way.’

‘All have sinned and come short of God’s glory ;’ then where
Have they any good works among others to share ?
If they’ve nothing but poor ‘filthy rags’ of their own,
They have no coat for you, as a gift, or a loan.”

“Oh ! now, Mr. James,” Daniel said, “it’s not right
Of the saints and their righteousness so to make light.”—
—“I’m not making light of them, Dan ; I revere
The memory of saints ; they were blessings while here.
If I call their good works ‘filthy rags,’ ’tis no more
Than the Prophet Isaiah has called them before.
They have finished their course, and to heaven are gone,
Not to boast before God of good works they have done ;
Or how many they left to poor souls to be given,
That others may climb, by *their* merits, to heaven ;
No ! *this* the beginning and end of their song,
PRAISE, BLESSING, AND GLORY, TO JESUS BELONG !
He ONLY a righteousness has to bestow,
Sufficient to clothe every sinner below.

'Tis not parcelled out like a wealthy man's dole,
But each of mankind may lay claim to the whole ;
'Tis not given to make up what we want of our own,—
Christ works *all* the work of redemption *alone* ;
'Tis a righteousness free from the shadow of sin,
All perfect without, and all holy within.

“ But, Daniel, the Bible says *Christ died for all* :
Now surely those saints on whose mercy you call,
If *they* can save others by dint of *their* works,
They can't want a Saviour—like heathens and Turks.
But let us examine how some of them speak,—
Their account of themselves I suppose we may take.—
Paul calls himself “ less than the least of all saints ”
In one place—and then in another he paints,
In the darkest of colours, the works he had wrought,
When against Jesus Christ and his gospel he fought.
If any should say that it might be so *then*,
But he afterwards proved the most holy of men ;

I tell them he'd want more than that to atone
For the guilt of the deeds he had formerly done ;
So, instead of a surplus to offer to you,
He'd want something else to be added thereto ;
For the picture he gives of himself, though 'tis brief,
Is striking,—‘ Of sinners,’ he says, ‘ *I am chief.*’

“ And then there's Saint Peter, the saint of your choice,
I know that you can't but attend to *his* voice.
I'm sure you remember yourself what he said,
In the tenth of The Acts the account may be read,—
When Cornelius went forth the apostle to meet,
And thinking to worship him, fell at his feet,—
You know in what words he accosted him, Dan,
He bid him ‘ stand up, he himself was a man ;’
‘ A sinful man,’ too, was the phrase that he took,
Himself to describe,—(see fifth of Saint Luke.)
Now if Peter and Paul had no goodness to spare,
Who else can have any with others to share ?”

Still Daniel objected ; “ I think, sir, you see,
It is not for a double-dyed sinner, like me,
To go straight before God, and have no one between,—
I could not do that if I went to the queen ;
If I asked for *her* pardon this minute, you know
I’d want some one before in her presence to go ;
And she but a woman!—Then sure ’tis a thing
I’d want, sir, when going to Heaven’s great King.”

To this Old James answered, “ You’re right, Dan, you’re right :
I see it myself in the very same light ;
And isn’t it wonderful now”—(he went on,
His face, with delight, shining bright as the sun)—
“ That God should provide what we never could find
And give us an Advocate* just to our mind ?
Why, tell me for what did Christ Jesus come down,
And veil his bright glory in flesh like our own ?
For what did the Maker of all condescend
Three-and-thirty long years among rebels to spend ?

* 1 John ii. 1.

For what did he bear their unkindness and scorn,
Give his blood to be shed, and his flesh to be torn?
But just that he might in our own nature be
A sure Mediator * for you, Dan, and me !
Just that we might *know* there was one on the throne
Who felt for our sorrows and made them his own !—
Oh, Dan, never think that we want any other !
He's a friend that sticks closer by far than a brother ; †
Our sins *he* will cleanse, and our cause he will plead,
Who on Calvary's cross suffered once in our stead !”

Dear children, if I was a painter I'd draw
As striking a picture as ever you saw ;
And the figure, upon the foreground, should be Dan,
With looks half bewildered, as first he began
To see that the work of redemption was done,
Alone and for ever, by God's only Son ;

* 1 Tim. ii. 5.

† Prov. xviii. 24.

The Father well pleased with the Son's sacrifice,
And giving his grace "without money and price."—
—"Oh, sir! Mr. James! Is it true? Can it be
That God, for Christ's sake, will have pity on me?"—
—"Will have pity! Why, Dan, it already is done!
God showed he *had* pity by giving his Son!
He gave the best gift that he had to bestow,
He gave him for every transgressor below.
'God so loved *the world*,'—now doesn't that prove
Each sinner on earth may partake of his love?—
'Tisn't God that refuses the sinner his grace,
But the sinner that flies from his offered embrace.
He's able and willing to save us, but still
He'll not save us, Daniel, against our own will.
If his Spirit is striving with men, and they choose
His Spirit to quench, and his grace to refuse,
It would not become his pure nature, you know,
To take them to heaven, when they don't wish to go.
Oh, come to the Saviour!—In him you'll be blest;
Submit to his will, and he'll work all the rest.

‘Him that cometh to me I’ll in no wise cast out.’*
With a promise so plain, can you linger or doubt?”

“Oh, sir, I don’t doubt,—I am willing, indeed;
I see he’s exactly the Saviour I need.
But the depth of my sin no one living can know,
I didn’t, myself, know it, a short time ago.
And how can I think he’ll be willing to give
Such blessings to one that’s unworthy to live?”

“Oh, Dan,” said the pedlar, “take heed what you say;
Put every hard thought of the Saviour away.
Do you think it is possible now, when *you would*
Be willing to come, he’s *not* willing you *should*?—
That *you would* be longing his love to possess,
And *he not* be willing to pardon and bless?—
'Tis wickedness, Daniel, to think such a thought,—
'Tis despising the blood with which sinners are bought.

* John vi. 37.

You see, 'tis to earn his free mercy you want,
And again, and again, I repeat it, YOU CAN'T.
The sin that destroys us is all that's our own,
And every thing good is the Saviour's alone.
'Tis no merit in us to his mercy to fly,
When we know that we *must*,—or eternally die,
Any more than for him that is tossed on the wave,
To strive for the life-boat that's coming to save.

“Nor think that it makes any difference at all
That some sins are great, and some others are small :—
That's human invention ;—a sin is a sin,—
Whether stealing a diamond, or stealing a pin.
The lie for a jest, or the perjurer's oath,
God hates them alike, and will punish them both ;
The spite in the heart, or the blood on the hand,
Alike are opposed to his will and command.
The holiest man that on earth ever stood
Must be washed and made white in the Lamb's precious blood.”*

* Rev. vii. 14.

There are, who immured in dark dungeons have lain,
Till sunshine and moonlight to them seemed in vain :
Who, after long years of drear solitude past,
Have welcomed the footsteps of freedom at last.
But when from their prison led forward to greet
The daylight they never expected to meet,
Have found that its beams were too vividly bright,
And shut them, in hasty amaze, from their sight.
Thus, Dan,—long in error's dark dungeons confined,—
Found the light of the gospel too much for his mind ;
Again, and again, shut its beams from his view,
Rejecting the promise he longed to find true.

But Jesus, the great Sun of righteousness, brings
True "healing," as well as "true light," on his wings :*
The longer, intent on his glories, we gaze,
The more we can "bear" of his heavenly rays,†
Converting the soul, making simple men wise,
Rejoicing the heart and enlightening the eyes.

* Compare Malachi iv. 2 ; John i. 9.

† John xvi. 12.

Old James raised his spirit to Heaven, and sought
For grace and direction to speak as he ought ;
To trust to no wisdom or power of his own,
But leave all the glory with Jesus alone.
He opened his Bible, and prayed that the word
Might be made in his hands as a “two-edged sword,”*
To pierce and destroy every error that stood,
Keeping back the poor lad from the fountain of good.

Well, children, he read,—and the portion he took
Commenced at the two-and-twentieth chapter of Luke ;
And great was the joy he experienced that hour,
When he saw that the gospel was mighty in power ;
Not only convincing the sinner of sin,
But planting new hopes and affections within.
He watched its effect and observed, as he read,
That Dan by degrees dropped his hand from his head.
Then darkness and gloom from his brow seemed to fly,
And something like hope brightened up in his eye.

* Heb. iv. 12.

James read of the Saviour's deep agony borne,
That man, to the God he had left, might return :—
He read about Judas,—who basely betrayed
The Lord, at whose bidding the worlds were all made.
He read about Peter,—denying the friend
He had promised to follow and own to the end ;
How the Lord turned around at the moment and “ *looked,*”
And thus meekly his guilty disciple rebuked.
He read of the deed on Mount Calvary done,
When men to a cross nailed God's well-belov'd Son.
He read how Christ prayed to his Father in heaven,
That the sin of his murderers might be forgiven.
Then paused,—for Dan suddenly started upright,
And clasping together his hands with delight,
Cried,—“ Stop, sir ! No, no, sir ! Don't stop ! Let me hear
Those tidings of joy, every day, for a year !—
Every hour, every minute :—they come on my heart,
Bringing comfort and joy nothing else can impart.
To think of his leaving his kingdom on high,
For hard-hearted rebels to suffer and die !

To think of his spending the last of his breath
In praying for those that were seeking his death !
Oh, yes, Mr. James, now, at last, I can see
There's room in his heart for a rebel like me ;
Though sure in its journeys the sun never shone
On a sinner so hardened as I am,—not one.
He said of his murderers, that they didn't know
The thing they were doing,—with me 'twas not so ;—
For often I felt when my mother and you
Were reading the Bible,—‘ THAT BOOK MUST BE TRUE ;
And as sure as it is,—by its law I'll be tried,
At the great judgment day.—And how can I abide
The eye of the Judge ?—What excuse can I give
Why I would not his offers of mercy receive ?
Why I turned from his gracious and holy commands,
To trust in poor creatures, the work of his hands ?
But now, sir, I cast them for ever away ;
In Jesus, my Lord, is my hope and my stay.
Let him do with me now what he sees to be best,
I've come at his bidding,—in him to find rest !”

Poor Daniel! he wept in his fulness of heart,
And Old James in his feelings took no little part.
But the hours of the evening were fast wearing on,
And, unwilling, he rose from his seat to be gone.
Then Dan grasped his hand, and said, "Sir, ere you go,
Say what of my mother? Oh! pray, let me know."—
—"Your mother is better now, Dan. She was ill,
But I think you will soon see her here, if God will."—
—"One word more, Mr. James,—it is hard—but I'll try
To say what I want—do you think, sir,—I'll—die?"—
—"Leave that to the Lord, Dan, we know He has power
The soul to sustain in the heaviest hour."—
—" 'Tisn't that, sir,—not that;—though sure life is sweet,
And bitter the death I'm expecting to meet:
But, sir, is it wrong?—Though I would not be proud,
Yet I wouldn't like to have any say I was cowed:
And I think, if I should be for death, that the sight
Of her love and her grief would unman me, sir, quite.
And some might mistake me, and think that the Lord
Was unable to help, or was false to his word."—



“ And now till to-morrow, I bid you farewell.”

p. 55.

—“Leave all with himself,” said Old James, “and be sure
Whatever he sends he’ll give grace to endure ;
He only the end of this matter can tell,—
And now,—till to-morrow,—I bid you farewell.”

Concerning Dan’s trial I’ve little to say,
It came on, as appointed, the very next day ;
Fine speeches both for and against him were made,
Where flashy young lawyers their talents displayed.
I only need say that the case was so plain,
’Twas clear every hope of acquittal was vain.
And when for their verdict the jury retired,
’Twas whispered consulting was hardly required.
Yet think not that they were unfeeling.—In truth,
All pitied poor Dan when they noticed his youth.
Nay, some said his looks were so gentle and mild,
They’d as soon charge with treason an innocent child.

In an hour, when the jury returned to their places,
The verdict seemed written on each of their faces ;

To hear it Old James did his breathing suspend,
'Twas—"GUILTY! but yet we to mercy commend."—
—"Commended to mercy," gasped James, and looked round
To where Dan was seated—his eyes on the ground.
One moment the blood his pale countenance flushed,
Then back to his heart just as quickly it rushed—
And he moved not a muscle till ordered to stand,
To await in that posture the judge's demand—
"If the prisoner has reason to give at the last,
Why sentence against him ought not to be past."

"My lord," he replied, "I have nothing to say,—
My own folly and vanity led me astray.
My counsel have said there were others in fault;
But I don't say *that*—I don't think that I ought.—
I know 'tis not likely I'll live very long,
And I wouldn't, when I'm dying, charge any with wrong.
If it's God's will, and yours, and the queen's, that I die,
In peace with all men in my grave I would lie ;

I hope that my God my transgressions forgives,
Through the merits of Him that *was* dead and *now* lives.
But, I say, all young men to my warning attend,
Avoid what brings me to so bitter an end."

Some minutes the judge was unable to speak,
And those who were near saw a tear on his cheek.
And though many a hardened old sinner was by,
There were few, at that moment, whose eyelids were dry.
When at last the judge placed the black cap on his head,
The house was as still as if all had been dead.
The sentence was passed,—it was DEATH.—At the sound,
A thrill of deep feeling and sorrow went round :
But when the good judge had declared his intent,
Without any delay, the appeal to present,
That mercy might be to the prisoner extended,
All feeling, but that of delight, was suspended.
Old James shouted loudly,—“ God bless you, my lord !”
(The crowd who were present re-echoed the word,)

“The blessing of her that is ready to perish,
Be with you till death, and then may you flourish
A plant of the Lord in his garden of light,
And that is my prayer for your lordship this night.”

And now, my dear children, I think that the rest
Of the story of Dan may be easily guessed.
The sentence of death that recorded had been,
Was speedily changed, by the grace of the queen,—
To being transported far over the sea,
An exile for life from old Ireland to be.
His mother came up, all the way from Lough Conn,
To give him her blessing before he was gone ;
To look once again,—only once,—on his face,
To fold him again in a mother’s embrace,
To give him her Bible to take o’er the wave,
And carry his last look with’her to the grave.

The sad day is over,—the sad parting day,
To the convict-ship Dan has been now borne away ;



“ His mother came up, all the way from Lough Conn,
To give him her blessing before he was gone.” p. 58.

His mother and James in their lodging alone,
Are talking together of days that are gone;—
And of days that shall come,—when the shadows of time
Shall give place to the suns of a heavenly clime.
“Oh! James,” said the widow, “how little I thought,
When I prayed for my child, of the way he’d be brought;
But well I believe that for him ’tis the best,
And for me,—for ’tis hastening me on to my rest.
My life with its troubles and comforts is o’er,
To Lough Conn I never shall welcome you more.
I tried to keep up while poor Daniel was by,
Now I feel I have nothing to do—but—to die.
I know my poor boy you will never forget;
Perhaps, if you live, you may hear from him yet.
We’re all exiles, James, but we’ll soon be at home,
Oh! never again from the Saviour to roam,—
My child will be there,”—’twas the last word she said;
Old James clasped her hand—the poor widow was dead!

Dear sister in Jesus, farewell, we shall meet

Where sorrow and sin shall no longer surround us ;
Together with joy we shall fall at His feet,

Who, when we were lost, in this wilderness found us :
And then if our souls in their bliss can retrace

The changing events of life's sorrowful story,—
'Twill be but endearing the gifts of his grace,
And heightening the joys of the regions of glory.

And still as we welcome the tribes of the Lord,

From exile on earth to their country returning ;
We'll raise our thanksgivings in grateful accord,

For those who like us shall have ended their mourning ;
But chiefly when he our lamented shall come,

Who now on the turbulent billow is riding,
With joyful acclaim we shall welcome him home
To the land where "no sea" from the loved is dividing.

But, oh ! when the nations of those that are saved
Shall stand in the light of the glories adorning



Old James on his travels again.

The brow of the Victor,—who willingly braved,
For them, the reproach and the cross and the scorning,
Beholding the King in his beauty and grace !

All other attractions shall vanish before him,
Glad anthems shall ring through unlimited space,
And eternity's ages seem short to adore him !

'Twas thus the old pedlar his feelings expressed,
When the widow's remains had been laid to their rest.
He dropped a kind tear on the spot where they lay,
Then turned, in a while, to proceed on his way ;
To seek fresh occasion to honour the name
Of the Master he loved ; and he found, when he came,
Employed in the work he had called him to do,
And acknowledged by him as wise, faithful, and true.







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